

TRADE AREA GROWS IN MID-MANHATTAN

**Empire State Building Will Be
New Business Hub, Says
Peter Grimm.**

UTILITY LINKED WITH ART

**Faster Elevator Speed Fosters the
Erection of Taller Edifices in
Many Parts of the World.**

The erection of the Empire State Building at Fifth Avenue and Thirty-fourth Street is a significant forward step in the development of a large business centre at that point in midtown Manhattan, and will serve to show the value of decentralizing business groupings, says Peter Grimm, president of the Real Estate Board of New York, in a discussion of the possible effects of New York's tallest skyscraper on trade and realty activity.

"The new building, combining utility and art, is a monument to the steady growth of New York," Mr. Grimm states. "Besides fostering the expansion of the Fifth Avenue district of which it will be the hub it will serve other useful purposes. The tendency to group too many great structures at such strategic points as Broad and Wall Streets and Forty-second Street and Madison Avenue has had an adverse effect on transportation, and the Empire State will serve to draw some of this traffic to a new zone.

"Surpassing in height all church edifices and steeples, State capitols and the Washington Monument, modern office buildings dominate the skyline of America and are beginning to dominate the foreign building height. There are now approximately 400 buildings in the United States more than twenty stories high, one-half of which are in New York City. Empire State is eighty-five stories.

"The metropolis of America has set the world an example in skyscrapers for practical uses. Toronto has a twenty-nine-story hotel, which is the tallest structure in the British Empire. Melbourne, in Australia, came near surpassing Toronto with a forty-story building but abandoned the plan, its tallest building being only thirteen stories.

"It was not long ago that an American automobile company built the tallest building in Madrid, it being another instance of utilitarianism blended with good design; but, since then the telephone company in Madrid has created a 'new highest' there by erecting a picturesque fifteen-story building with a Spanish tower. Thus one utility concern surpassed the other in large construction for practical purposes. Athens has a sixteen-story building. And Shanghai, China, has a twenty-one-story structure, showing it has caught the spirit of the Occident.

"Modern engineering has made a building such as Empire State possible as a great office utility by creating an elevator system for quick transportation to and from all parts of it. The installation of the first elevator in New York was in 1850 when tall buildings were unknown. In speed and safety the latest type of elevator surpasses the type of 1850 to the same extent as the steel frame office building surpasses the one of the pre-steel era. The elevator speed limit now is 700 feet per minute. Owing to greatly improved safety devices the law will be changed to allow a speed of about 1,200 feet a minute, and in several of the newest buildings the lifts are built to run almost that fast.

"Empire State, it would seem, will be the world's structural prodigy for a long time to come because the practicability of a higher building has not been demonstrated. Its tall mast stands as the sign of a great future office 'building centre.'"

The New York Times

Published: April 5, 1931

Copyright © The New York Times